

Aloha Kakahiaka Honorable Donovan Dela Cruz and Members of the City Council:

O Steven Agasa *ko`u inoa a me* [My name is Steven Agasa and] I am a full-time clarinetist with the Royal Hawaiian Band since July 2001. I am a graduate from Arizona State University with a Master's degree in Clarinet Performance and Bachelor's degree in Music Education from the University of Hawaii. Throughout my education, I was exposed to world-class conductors, performers, and ensembles.

I am against proposed Bill 8, Amendment 2-15.3 on qualifications of a bandmaster.

Adding "fluency in the Hawaiian language" as a qualification for bandmaster will eliminate the vast majority of highly trained band conductors throughout our fine country and essentially the world.

At the time of Henry Berger's tenure, the predominant language was Hawaiian. Majority of the musicians and audience members in our society do not fluently speak the Hawaiian language and therefore, it is irrelevant for this qualification to be added to the bandmaster position. Furthermore, the bandmaster can acquire information on Hawaiian language and culture through experts in this field.

At the University of Hawaii, I took four semesters of Hawaiian language. Does this make me a better musician to perform Hawaiian music on my clarinet? Probably not! I became a better musician through my education in music, and because of my music education, I am able to perform Hawaiian music at a higher level.

Credentials of a bandmaster should heavily weigh on musicianship and musical qualifications such as artistic skills in wind ensemble conducting, pedagogy on band instruments, and competency on the style of Hawaiian music rather than Hawaiian language by itself. A knowledgeable and well-educated conductor will serve justice to the music from any genre. Finally, a respected conductor will create a world-class wind ensemble that will promote music of Hawaii throughout the world.

If this bill is passed it will close the opportunity for many qualified conductors to serve as future bandmasters for the Royal Hawaiian Band. Please oppose this bill.

Mahalo Nui Loa Kākou!

Steven D. Agasa

Steven D. Agasa
Musician I, B-flat Clarinet
Royal Hawaiian Band

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